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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/788,771	02/27/2004	Pieter G. Wybro	MOD013/145573	8450

23444 7590 11/28/2006

ANDREWS & KURTH, L.L.P.  
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EXAMINER
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SWINEHART, EDWIN L

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3617

DATE MAILED: 11/28/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

**Office Action Summary**

Application No.

10/788,771

Applicant(s)

WYBRO ET AL.

Examiner

Ed Swinehart

Art Unit

3617

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 22 September 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-7, 9-14, 16, 23-26, 30-32, 34-37, 39, 41, 42 and 45-47 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-7, 9-14, 16, 23-26, 30-32, 34-37, 39, 41, 42 and 45-47 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)                                | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)                       | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application                       |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  |

### DETAILED ACTION

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 9/22/2006 has been entered.

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

3. Claims 1-3,5-7,10-14,16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Finn et al.

Finn discloses the claimed invention, including production risers **16** coupled to a subsea well, and suspended at an upper end thereof above deck, and laterally supported at a lower elevation at **22**.

4. Claims 1-7,9-14,16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by White et al.

White discloses the claimed invention, including a column supporting a deck above a submerged hull. Risers, connected in fluid communication with a subsea well, are suspended at **9**, such suspension inherently placing the riser in tension (therefore **9** are "tensioners" as claimed). The risers are laterally supported at a second elevation

Art Unit: 3617

below the suspension point, at either inwardly or outwardly facing parts of the hull (note figures 6 and 8). Such risers having side entry to the guides.

5. Claims 23,25,26,31,32,34,35,36,39,41,42 and 45-47 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Thomas.

Thomas discloses the claimed invention, including an upper deck supported above a submerged hull by a plurality of columns. A plurality of apertures **22** are provided, one for each riser. The risers are suspended from above the main deck by tensioners. Moorings **26** are provided as well. A "bearing assembly" **28** is provided, and permits movement as claimed.

Re claim 23, the "bearing assembly" **40** is affixed to the bottom hull surface, which is an exterior surface.

Re claim 45, such fails to define over Thomas, as the bearing assembly is disposed at a juncture of the bottom, which is outwardly facing. The word "at" does not mean "on".

The passage **22** may be referred to as a moonpool.

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. Claims 24-37 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thomas in view of Eie.

Thomas fails to show the moorings assuming a generally vertical orientation, as they extend in catenaries.

Eie teaches vertically oriented moorings **13**.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to provide a mooring arrangement to Thomas as taught by Eie.

Such a combination would have been desirable so as to reduce cost.

8. Claims 23-26,30,31,32,34,35 and 45-47 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Petersen in view of Eie.

Petersen discloses a series of risers coupled about the interior moonpool perimeter of the hull. The risers are laterally inserted into keel guides, and tensioned by winches which allow vertical movement as is known in the art. Petersen fails to show a mooring.

Eie is applied as above.

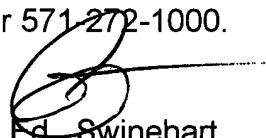
9. Applicant's arguments with respect to the claims have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

10. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Ed Swinehart whose telephone number is 571-272-6688. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Thursday 6:30 am to 2:00 pm..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Samuel Morano can be reached on 571-272-6684. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 3617

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.



Ed Swinehart  
Primary Examiner  
Art Unit 3617